West Asheville Oral History

Mrs. Inez Horton
July 14, 1999

Interviewer: Millie Jones

Memories of West Asheville by Inez Horton

I am not a native Ashevillian, but nearly all of my life has been spent in Asheville, and my home has been in West Asheville from the time I came here as a 19 year-old girl in 1926.

I received my business training at Cecil's Business College on Haywood Street in downtown Asheville, and my first job after graduation was as Secretary to Russell Davis, Vice-President of Central Bank and Trust Company, which closed its doors during the Depression in November 1930.

I was living with a Cousin in Black Mountain when I was in school, but when I went to work, it became necessary for me to find a place to live in Asheville. A lovely lady by the name of Bessie Reece worked in the Trust Dept of the bank, and she invited me to make my home with her. She and her husband lived in a small house on Vermont Avenue in West Asheville. There was a young man working in the bank by the name of Frank Bishop, who invited me to go to Calvary Baptist Church with him to B.Y.P.U. I was a member of First Baptist Church in Asheville, but Frank introduced me to some of his West Asheville friends at Calvary. I remember that Mr. and Mrs. John Lawrence were adult sponsors for the youth group at B.Y.P.U. Mrs. Lawrence was the daughter of W.F. Logan, one of the pioneer builders of West Asheville. Her sisters were teachers in the public schools of Asheville. The Logan family lived in a beautiful home on Logan Avenue, and they were part of the group that formed Calvary Baptist Church, the first Baptist Church west of the French Broad River in the city of Asheville.

My friends, the Reeces, moved from Vermont Avenue to a little home on Mildred Avenue, and I moved with them. Later they bought a larger home at 163 Vermont Avenue, and I continued to live with them. When the bank closed in 1930, both Mrs. Reece and I were out of work. I was fortunate to find work almost immediately with Sam Fisher, an insurance broker. Mrs. Reece also found work locally, and I was married in their home at 163 Vermont Avenue on Jan. 14, 1934. My husband and I rented several homes before we finally bought a home at 39 Baker Avenue near Calvary Baptist Church and we moved our church letters to that church. After our children were born, we needed a larger home and we bought a four bedroom home at 28 Vermont Court off Vermont Ave.,

After the children were grown, we sold the large home, and bought a small two-bedroom house at 32 Vermont Court, where I now live. This shows that most of my life has been lived in West Asheville, although I worked in Asheville east of the river.

The following are some of the early memories that I have of the West Asheville area. I remember that:
1. John Lawrence operated a grocery store located on Haywood Road as it comes up from the river towards Beacham's Curve. I remember that Clyde Bennett operated a filling station at Beacham's Curve. I remember that there was once an A&P store on Haywood Road near Beacham's Curve. Dr. Shider had a drugstore known as Shider's Drugstore at Beacham's Curve. I remember that a street car line ran from Asheville to West Asheville ending at what is now Brevard Road. There was a Cleaners called Bon Ton Cleaners near Wellington St. and Haywood Road. I remember a Bakery on Haywood Road near Aycock School, and a department store operated by Ed Barker on Haywood Road. Mr. and Mrs. Barker lived on Vermont Avenue. I remember that Jack Couch operated a Cafe on the corner of ~~Baker Avenue and~~ / Burton Avenue and Haywood Road. I remember a large A&P grocery Store next to Trinity Methodist Church. Pinner's Drug Store stood on the corner of Dorchester and Haywood Road.
Dr. Orr's beautiful home stood on Haywood Road near Baker Avenue. Dr. Orr sold Calvary Baptist Church some of the land where the church property now stands. Old Dr. Gardner owned a home and office where the Salvation Army building now stands. The West Asheville Fire Department was located on Haywood Road next to Aycock School.
May's Market stood on the corner of Haywood Road and Herron Avenue. It was the neighborhood gathering place for many years. Dunn & Groce Funeral Home stood at the corner of Vermont Venue and Haywood Road
Groce Funeral was once the home of old Dr. Anderson who practiced medicine in this area. Dr. Hoyle, a dentist had an office on Haywood Road above Fortune's Hardware Store.

The lower part of Vermont Court and Davenport was woodland at the time I first began to live in this neighborhood. The Logan family owned a large tract, bordered by Hominy Creek, and a Mr. Brown owned a large adjoining tract now occupied ty Westwood Cohousing.

I bought shoes for my children from Mrs. Fred Thomas who operates Meadows Store on Haywood Road. I used my War Food Stamps to buy groceries from Mr. Russell who operated the Friendly Grocery Store on the corner of Burton Street and Haywood Road.

West Asheville is a community of friends. Although I was a "flatlander" originally, I was accepted without reservations into this neighborhood of friends. I think that because I came from a small-town environment, West Asheville appealed to me because of its small-town ambience. The neighborhood swimming pool and community center provided my children with places to play and interact with their friends, and the church helped my husband and me provide their spiritual training. Hall Fletcher Junior High School had excellent teachers, which helped my children escel when they went to Lee Edwards High School where the more prestigous Asheville pupils also attended.

Nancy, my daughter, attended Carson Newman College in Tenn., and then trained to be a Medical Technologist at Grady Hospital in Atlanta, Ga. She is now working in this field in the U. of Va. Hospital in Charlottesville, Va. Bill, our son, was rated as a National Merit Scholar when he graduated from High School. He attended Wake Forest College on a scholarship, and graduated with a B.S. Degree, majoring in Chemistry and minoring in Biology. He later attended U. of Ga., Pharmacy School, and graduated with honors. He now operates an independent pharmacy, Beverly Hills Pjarmacy, on Tunnel Rpad. Many of our West Asheville boys and girls have been successsful in the business world and professional world. It is a good place in which to raise a family.

I was fortunate to live neighbor to a descendant of one of the pioneer families of this section - J. Lowe Wright. Mr. Wright was the son of Jarrett. The old Jarrett home at one time stood on the corner of Haywood Road and Jarrett Street. There is a small family cemetery on the edge of Greenhill Cemetery called the Jarrett cemetery, J. Lowe Wright was an innovative creative man. After his retirement, he passed the time creating furniture and novelties in his woodworking shop. He made the large wooden sign that marks the entrance to the Cradle of Forestry. He made a small scale model of the first Forestry School which standsin the Cradle of Forestry. He made furniture for his house as well as his children. He even made the concrete blocks out of which his home was built